The Black Cat

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April 1901

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The Black Cat

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A Delilah of the Cinder-Path.*

BY SAMUEL SCOVILLE, JR.

IT all began with a letter in an odd, twisted hand that informed Richard Brayton, Esq., of Danvers-Island-on-the-Sound that Miss Leslie was stopping for two or three days at the Victoria, in New York, with her aunt, and that they would be glad to see the said Richard there if his athletic duties would permit of his calling, etc., etc. The athletic duties as above referred to were no other than the representing of America in the mile run at the great Anglo-Saxon International Meet, then less than a week away. For, after years of negotiations, manœuvrings and diplomacy, Great Britain and her Colonies were to meet the United States at the Danvers Island athletic field in games that would decide the athletic supremacy of the two great Anglo-Saxon nations once and for all. England's world in Europe, Asia, Africa and the Islands of the Sea had been ransacked to form a team that should "lift" the great jewelled Anglo-Saxon Challenge Cup. Nor had America been idle. From the Gulf to the Falls, and from Coney Island to the Seal Rocks, her

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seventy-five millions had been sifted to find men worthy to protect her athletic honor. Sir William Massey, the Mæcenas of English athletics, had organized and was to captain the English team, while "Uncle Billy" Smith, the Mentor and authority on athletics in America, performed a similar duty for the United States.

Into the healthful monotony of Dick's training came this letter, demoralizing to the last degree, for every line of the strange handwriting was redolent with memories of Madge Leslie; memories of a moon-path on the purple Irish Sea; of a lonely nook by the spare anchor on the good steamer *Scotia;* of maddening violet eyes that gleamed from beneath long, black lashes; of a soft, vibrant little hand; of a voice whose every cadence was a caress — there was no end to them. And memories are worse for training than cigarettes. The first evidence of the demoralization wrought was that Dick sat with his feet on the piazza railing and gazed dreamily out on the Sound, when by rights he should have been jogging a fast two miles on the track. The crisis came that night.

"She wants to see you! wants to see you!" chanted Sentiment boisterously, hurrying Dick into his evening clothes.

"Only common courtesy," retorted Reason, icily. "And besides, a man in training has no business to make calls."

"How about that last night on the *Scotia*, eh?" enquired Sentiment, insinuatingly, starting Dick towards town with the utmost rapidity.

"Nothing but the moonlight," rejoined Reason, scornfully; "dangerous thing, moonlight, especially on the water."

"We'll settle it by seeing her," replied Sentiment, craftily, sending up cards at the Victoria.

Midnight found Dick sitting by his bedroom window, fully dressed, staring out into the night.

"She's the only girl in the world. What dear, maddening, tender, wicked eyes she has," babbled Sentiment, incoherently. "If only her aunt had stayed away five minutes longer."

"Well, it wasn't the moonlight," acknowledged Reason, weakly, as Dick rolled into bed. But a night's sleep revived the controversy.

"What made you tell her, an English girl, how you were going to run an international race?" Reason began acrimoniously.

"Because she asked me," Sentiment responded, absently.

"It's science that wins nowadays," she said, "and the whole world loves a winner — and — she's going to give me an answer after the games!" shouted Sentiment, suddenly, and Reason fled for his life.

Dawned at last the great day that was to decide the battle of the Anglo-Saxons when British muscle and endurance were to be pitted against American nerve and skill. The athletic field at Ardley Oval, with its famous egg-shaped track, had been selected as the meeting place, and not since the golden days of Greece, when an assembled world thronged the sides of the Hill Cronion at Olympia, had met a vaster crowd. The track had been surrounded by enormous tiers of seats that would accommodate a hundred thousand people and every inch of space was taken. One side, beneath a huge waving Union Jack, was given up to the subjects of the Queen, and they awaited the initial event with that imperturbable self-confidence which is at once the envy and the exasperation of the rest of the world. The crowd was a cosmopolitan one. Well-groomed Englishmen and wretchedly gowned Englishwomen sat next to slouch-hatted wheat princes from Manitoba, while "belted earls," unkempt Australian ranchmen and sallow East Indians fraternized with the utmost good-fellowship. The bleachers beneath the floating Stars and Stripes were equally crowded by delegations from every State in the Union, who consumed the wait in cheering with laudable patriotism everything American, from the flag to a piano-organ which played "There'll Be a Hot Time."

At either end of the oval on the green turf stood a great white tent where the members of each national team were to await their turn. In characteristic manner each captain heartened his men for the approaching struggle. Sir William adjusted his monocle firmly and regarded his team.

"You look fairly fit, gentlemen," he said, approvingly; "just compete up to your form and we win."

In the other tent Uncle Billy Smith was the orator of the occasion. His final exhortation to his team from the top of the rubbing table, although not so brief as that of Sir William, was equally to the point.

"Boys," he shouted, every gray hair on his head standing upright. "We're up against the pick of the world to-day, and we're going to beat 'em! We've always beaten 'em! Think of '76, think of 1812, think of — Oh, think of any old thing you darn please — only beat 'em!"

Uncle Billy climbed down amid riotous applause and instantly the tent was filled with the feverish taint of the raw alcohol with which supple-handed rubbers began to massage limbs on whose strength and speed that day depended a nation's honor. Seven events constituted the programme. First places alone scored, and each nation was limited to two entries in each contest, while the captains were pledged to limit the make-up of their teams solely to amateur British or American-born citizens.

The suspense of the long wait had gradually wrought the crowd up to a fever of excitement. A dozen leathern-voiced announcers roared out the event and the names of the competitors through megaphones to all points of the great circumference, while a hush of tense expectancy fell upon the crowd. Through it cut the shrill whistle of the starter, and from either tent the two competitors in the short dash came forward simultaneously to the start and eyed each other hard as they shook hands formally, while a roar of cheers ran from one side of the great amphitheatre to the other as the old Saxon love of battle seized and maddened the crowd. They were in strange contrast. McPherson, who ran for Britain, was an Australian, gaunt-muscled and burned by a tropical sun almost black, while the American champion, Dalton, seemed commonplace and youthful, with a placid, expressionless face. Both men by their performance were in a class by themselves and were entered without running mates.

But at the crack of the starter's pistol Dalton's face changed as if a mask had dropped from it. From a round-faced school-boy, he became a young demon, running with a mad abandon and fire that shot him to the front from the very flash of the signal. At the fifty-yard mark he was full two yards in the lead, skimming over the ground with the short, rapid stride that had earned him the nickname of the "Creeper." But his gain stopped at the half-way mark. The Australian's gait, ungraceful, with a long plunging stride, was one that needed the momentum of distance to reach its

climax. Slowly the awkward plunges increased in length and rapidity and the long, brown, sinewy figure drew nearer and nearer to the leader, until, at ninety yards, the two were racing neck and neck. Within a stride or so of the finish, as if some hidden spring had been touched, McPherson's whole body seemed to shoot forward in one sustained movement that broke the tape six inches ahead of his opponent. England had scored first blood and a chorus of deep-throated cheers from the Union-Jack side fairly shook the bleachers.

The next event, the high jump, was almost universally conceded to America, even by the most sanguine supporters of England, for Myers, the champion of the States, was a jumper whose ordinary performance outclassed anything on the British record-books. Many thought that the English team would offer no entry and that America would take the event by default. Yet as Myers sauntered confidently out from his tent he started back in astonishment. For the British entry was a shrivelled, brown-skinned man, with deep sunken eyes and a row of strange white scars running all down his shrunken arms. There was a moment of puzzled silence, then went up a gigantic roar of laughter as England's representative squatted impassively on his heels by the take-off and fixedly regarded his opponent and the scene in general with half-shut eyes that glittered like crumbs of glass beneath his shaggy brows.

"Our entry is Bahadur Khan," drawled the slow voice of Sir William, in response to a murmured enquiry from the referee. "He is a Bhil of British India, and, of course, a British subject. Mr. Khan occasionally practices high-jumping — er — as — er — a religious observance."

All further remarks were cut short by another roar of laughter, in the midst of which the referee's whistle blew. Myers, who had been regarding his diminutive opponent with unmixed contempt, won the toss and elected to take first jump with the bar at five feet, six inches. This height he negotiated like a bird with the peculiar scissor-like jump which he had brought to such perfection. Bahadur Khan still crouched motionless when his turn came.

"Our entry passes the height," explained Sir William to the referee. Inch by inch the height crept up and still Bahadur Khan

waited impassively. Well did Myers prove his reputation that day, until the bar stood a fraction of an inch above any known record of the world. Two failures. Then, for the last time, with his curious zigzag run, he approached the take-off. A tremendous spring, a writhe in mid-air, until the lithe body hung for a heart-beat almost parallel with the bar, and then a deft snap of the arms and legs cleared it, and Myers pitched head first into the soft earth, safe on the other side.

"It's your entry's try," said the referee to the English captain, after the tumult had died down.

"He claims the privilege of the rule," said the latter, indifferently, "and does not try until your man reaches his limit. Then, as I understand the rule, he has three tries at any distance equal to or above his opponent's best. I am right, am I not?"

"That is the rule," assented the referee.

America then announced that her entry rested on his last jump and the whole world waited for Bahadur Khan. For a moment he sat, seemingly unconscious of the crowd, and then slowly waved his open hand toward the bar with a curious lifting gesture.

"Our entry wants the bar raised," explained Sir William to the referee. The bar was raised, in response to Bahadur Khan's outstretched hand, higher and higher until the attendants were straining on tip-toe to place it across the pegs.

"Bahadur Khan, of British India, is England's entry. The bar stands at seven feet," thundered a dozen different megaphones to all parts of the crowd.

"Seven feet! That's a horse's record!" exclaimed a slouch-hatted ranchman from a front seat, and a puzzled silence fell on the whole crowd.

When the silence was complete Bahadur Khan finally arose and, throwing off his mantle, stood naked except for a pair of loose trunks. For a moment he looked at the bar, that stood full two feet above his head, and then, stretching forth his hand with a wild gesture towards the sun, he slowly walked back until he was some twenty yards from the take-off. Then like a flash the sinewy little body dashed straight at the bar, crouching as it ran. Ten feet from the take-off the wizened little figure shot straight into the air as if from a spring-board, rising up and up until the feet

were higher than the head, until finally, with a writhing-lift, as if from some invisible leverage, the whole body shot over the bar and landed feet foremost on the other side. The great crowd literally gasped for breath as Bahadur brushed the loose earth from his legs and disappeared inside the English tent. The whole performance was so impossible that it seemed positively uncanny.

The gloom of this double defeat was a little brightened for America when her entry, an undergraduate of the University of California, won the high hurdles handily. But the quarter mile again dashed her hopes. With magnificent judgment the British champion made his effort at just the right instant and won by inches. The only remaining events were the hammer-throw and the ten and one mile runs, in all three of which England was considered hopelessly strong. But the Saxon courage that burns brightest under defeat is a heritage that America shares equally with the mother-country, and though three straight victories were now necessary to win, her athletes never flinched. In the weight-throwing contest the English champion was a Goliath, a Highlander nearly seven feet in height, but he met his David in the form of an unassuming young man from Philadelphia, whose scientific swing, with every ounce of his body back of it, availed more than all the ponderous muscle of his opponent. With but two events left a tie was the best that the most sanguine American supporter dared hope for. Lang, the English distance runner, had only recently broken the world-record in the ten-mile run in a performance seconds better than anything reported in America.

The starter's whistle sounded and the American champion met the two English entries at the start.

"Is America ready?" enquired the referee, seeing that Uncle Billy was apparently waiting.

"Our second-string will be here in a moment," responded the latter. Even as he spoke the door of the little training-house near the American tent opened and a figure emerged that made even the impassive Sir William drop his monocle and stare open-mouthed with the rest. For America's second-string was an Indian, resplendent in war-paint, which with breech-clout and moccasins completed his costume.

"America's second entry is Matzu, an Indian of the Zuñi tribe,"

explained Uncle Billy gravely, "and a native-born American. He occasionally runs as — er — a religious ceremony."

As he approached the start the English runners regarded him with that disdain that a Briton always entertains for inferior races. Yet Matzu took his position in a manner that showed he was no novice in racing, though he gazed curiously at his unfamiliar surroundings. When the pistol sounded Lang started off with the heart-breaking burst of speed which he always displayed on the first mile.

Matzu seemed perfectly willing to follow his companion's lead and fell into the last place with a stride that despite his moccasined feet was a marvel of length and spring. For the first mile Lang led at a terrific pace, followed closely by the American champion, while the Indian trailed unconcernedly thirty yards in the rear. That distance covered, little by little Lang began to draw away from all save the Indian, who kept his place. Gradually the leader slackened his pace perceptibly as he deemed that he held his field safe. The Indian, maintaining his same swinging, even gait, seemed to regard the shouting crowd with much more interest than he did his competitors. Little by little he forged ahead of all save Lang, and as the latter began the third mile, the Indian was less than ten yards behind. Soon the rapid, even pat-pat of moccasined feet behind him told Lang of a rival who could not be overlooked and the sound stung him into new bursts of speed that for a time carried him out of ear-shot. Yet ever as he slackened his speed the steps came relentlessly nearer and nearer until the Indian's even breathing was at his very shoulder. Again he spurted, but it was a last effort, and in a few moments the Indian was again abreast of him. As they ran for awhile neck and neck the two were in strange contrast. The Englishman, with swollen veins and labored breathing, was straining every nerve and muscle to hold his place, while the Indian, with an effortless gait, seemed to regard his exhausted rival with an amused curiosity. At the end of another lap, in spite of Lang's most desperate efforts, the Indian's even stride gave him the lead. From then it was but a question of time. Lang was hopelessly beaten, and though he spurted gallantly, and now and again regained some of his lost distance, the gap

between himself and the Indian grew wider and wider and the latter at last broke the tape and the world's record together, half a lap ahead. Matzu calmly continued on his way after crossing the line, and it was not until he had proceeded nearly an extra lap that Uncle Billy could make himself heard above the uproar of cheers and laughter and convince his protégé that the race was over.

And now as the last contest, that was to decide the day, drew near, the tension became well-nigh unendurable. The grandly-fought drawn battle maddened the spectators. The Britons had lost their natural calm and the deep crashing notes of "God Save the Queen" thundered back across the arena in answer to the lilt and swing of the "Star Spangled Banner." No voice of officer or announcer could be heard above the roar of the two great fighting nations of the earth, exulting in the strength and speed of their sons by blood and adoption. Only in the tents was there silence, for there it was felt, as it could not be outside, that on the speed and endurance of two men hung the honor of two nations. Uncle Billy himself gave Dick a final rub-down to limber up his muscles and then every man in the team crowded up to shake his hand and wish him luck. It was a very cold hand, clammy with the weary terror of waiting that frets into the courage of the bravest. But Dick's eyes had a steady fire in them and his face, though white, had the setness of steel.

The national slogans ceased for a moment from sheer exhaustion of the singers and in the lull the referee seized his opportunity to sound his whistle for the last event. As the two champions came out from their tents, each with his running-mate, they stepped into a very tempest of sound. All the cheering before was a whisper to the hoarse roars that swept back and forth across the little arena. But as they approached the start there came a silence while the vast crowd bent eagerly forward in order that they might not miss a detail of this last struggle of the nations. As the men shook hands with the usual grim cordiality, Dick for the first time met Moran, the English champion. He saw a slight, beautifully built man, who seemed to be something over thirty, with a mocking, resolute face, that in some vague way seemed strangely familiar. The American campaign of the

race had been carefully planned. Dick's running-mate was to jump into the lead at the start, fight for it throughout and keep the pace as slow as possible, so that Dick's marvellous sprinting powers might not be exhausted before the finish. Moran had drawn the pole, then came Dick and the English and American second-strings, in the order named. "Get ready!" called the starter in his slow monotone, and every man dug his marks in the cinders with his spiked shoes. "Get set!" and all four bent forward, each in his favorite starting position.

For a second that seemed years the starter held them while every tense muscle quivered for the pistol. A false start or slip over the line meant ten yards penalty. "Crack!" went the pistol and the report boomed like a cannon in the waiting ears as all four sprang forward. From the outside the American second-string came across in a sprint for the pole and the lead. But strangely enough, Moran, a slow starter, if the reports were to be believed, would not be denied, but raced neck and neck for some minutes with the surprised second-string and, finally winning the pole, began to skim down the back-stretch at a tremendous clip. By a sprint Dick's running-mate won the lead as they neared the end of the first lap, but lost it the minute he tried to slow the pace. As they whirled past the starting-post in a bunch Dick essayed the rôle of pacemaker himself, in the hope that he might be more successful in gradually slowing the tremendous pace that the Englishman was setting. With a spurt he jumped the lead, quickened the pace for a few seconds and then gradually began to lower it with infinite care. Yet his gait had hardly slowed perceptibly before a mocking face flashed up even with his and he heard Moran half-whisper as he went past with a rush, "It's science that wins nowadays." The murmured words were like the slash of a whip across Dick's face and for a moment he saw red. Madge had betrayed him, and for a moment the sting of the thought swept from Dick's mind even the madness of the race. He came to himself to find Moran ten yards in the lead and trying his best to make a runaway race of it. Dick set his teeth grimly and swore to himself to win that race if his heart broke at the tape. Now for the third time the four swept past the starting-post and began the bitter third quarter, the quarter that tests the

very soul of a racer when the ache of the distance makes the taxed muscles and the flagging brain alike cry for rest with the finish still a weary way off. The two second-strings began to drop back, while Dick quickened his pace a little and strained every muscle to overtake Moran. His chest felt as if bound with a choking iron band and his legs began to acquire that strange helpless feeling with which sorely-taxed muscles protest against any further effort. Yet foot by foot he neared the figure ahead, though every stride racked his very vitals. On the back of Moran's jersey, plunging ahead, was a rusty spot, and Dick found himself wondering what made it. Then he fell to counting his steps, a last device to fight off the numbness that was stealing from his legs to his brain. The two second-strings dropped farther and farther back, unable to endure the terrific pace. Now the great bell on the starting-post clanged the signal that the leader had begun his last lap. Right at his shoulder ran Dick. The smile was gone from Moran's face and his stride wavered a little, while Dick's eyes began to take on a hot, dry, unseeing stare. Under a thunder of cheers from both nations they turned into the back-stretch and quickened their speed. At the last corner, just before the home-stretch was reached, Moran ran wide and Dick, with a staggering plunge, shot in between him and the pole and they swung into the home-stretch neck and neck. Fifty yards of terrible struggle lay between them and the thin red thread that marked the goal. Both men were nearly exhausted, but both summoned every ounce of reserve power for a last desperate effort. Men in the grand-stands leaned forward with tears running down their faces and stretching out their arms to the staggering runners, called them by name and begged them by their blood, by the honor of their nation, for one last effort.

"Come on, Moran! Come on, Brayton! For the love of God, come on!" they pleaded. Both men were lurching along in staggers, with Moran a shade in the lead. Unused to such a tremendous pace at the start, all of Dick's famed speed at the finish had been drained. Bright flashes darted before his eyes, there was a taste of blood in his mouth and from his waist down his body felt dead, while every stride seemed to tear his very heart-strings. Now the goal is a scant yard away and Moran

leads by an inch. Dick collects all his strength for a desperate *coup* and with a tremendous effort throws himself forward through the air at the end of a stride, and, even as he falls unconscious, feels the blessed pressure of the thread as it breaks against his breast a tiny inch before Moran's upraised foot — so close is the victory — reaches the ground beneath.

The white face and arms were streaked with black and blood where the sharp cinders had gashed them, but men stood uncovered and women wiped their eyes as two of the judges at the finish tenderly carried the unconscious figure of the winner to the American tent, and even in the full ecstasy of an unequalled victory there was no cheering until the resident physician of the Club announced that it was only a case of collapse, and that the victor would be himself again in a few hours.

Then how that horde of hoarse, hatless, perspiring Americans cheered, borrowing all the announcers' megaphones to help swell the tumult. They cheered Brayton, and they cheered Moran, they cheered Bahadur Khan and Matzu, they conscientiously cheered every officer and competitor by name, and finally ended in a prolonged and mighty cheer for old England. Then every Englishman shook the hand of every American that he could find, and plain ordinary every-day Americans slapped miscellaneous members of Parliament and peers of the kingdom on their noble backs unrebuked, and there was rejoicing galore on both sides. For the men of the Saxon blood, be they victors or vanquished, love foemen who have given them a fair, hard fight.

Several hours after the crowd had dispersed, Dick lay in bed in a private room at the club-house, staring at the ceiling, when there was a knock, and Robert, the steward, brought up the card of Mr. Cecil Moran.

"Says he must see you, sir, a moment," and Robert departed to usher the Englishman up. The thought of Madge's bad faith came back to Dick very bitterly and it was with a somewhat forced cordiality that he greeted his late opponent.

"My dear fellow," said Moran, leaving the door half open and going straight to the point. "You ran the gamest race I ever saw and I'm proud to have lost to a better man. I'm here to apologize to you for taking advantage of a knowledge of your

methods which I did not seek but which I could hardly help using when it came to me. My sister — "

"What's that!" shouted Dick, sitting up suddenly — "your sister?"

"Certainly," returned Moran in surprise, "Miss Leslie is my half-sister."

"Yes, quite so," returned Dick, "don't let me interrupt you."

"Well; she and I are devoted to each other, and she wanted me to win, and she wanted England to win, and — well — er — you know women don't look at things with the same strictness that we men do. But she insists upon apologizing for herself," and he departed hastily.

Before Dick could collect himself he was looking into eyes the color of wet violets and the sweetest voice in the world was saying, "Boy! boy of mine, I'm *so* sorry. I was going to have Jack to win and then tell you that you could — could — have *me* to make up for losing the race, but you've won the race after all and perhaps — perhaps you don't need both — do you?"

It is most extraordinary what a man will forgive the girl he loves. Samson undoubtedly would not have held out long against Delilah, even after that unfortunate tonsorial experience, if she had come back to him. As for Dick — it's not on record that he even tried.

A Touch Of Nature.*

BY WILLIAM FORSTER BROWN.

ARDLY had he lifted his face from the cool spring, when Lieutenant Herbert Craddock was seized from behind by two Union soldiers. The game was up — yet he trusted to his unshaven face, torn and dirty clothing and general woe-begone appearance to conceal the fact that he was a Confederate officer, the bearer of an important dispatch.

When he faced the keen-eyed and soldierly Federal captain he saw at once that it would be useless to deny being a soldier, and so, in answer to the question, "Who are you?" he replied simply:

"Lieutenant Craddock, of the Confederate service."

"How came you inside our lines and in disguise?"

"I was taken prisoner," he answered, slowly, "and escaped. I was making for General Lee's lines when your soldiers captured me. The briars had literally torn my uniform to shreds, and yesterday I exchanged its remnants for these planter's clothes."

This tale was true enough as far as it went, but it made no visible impression on the stern-faced inquisitor.

"Search him!" he ordered sharply.

The two troopers obeyed. Finally the taller of the two looked up and in a disappointed tone reported:

"There isn't a thing on him, sir."

The faint ghost of a smile of amusement stole over the face of the Confederate. The next instant he cursed himself for his folly, for the sharp eyes of the captain interpreted the look aright, and he sternly exclaimed:

"Search him again to the very skin — rip open his clothes from head to foot."

This time the investigation was so thorough that when the shorter trooper with his sabre pried the heels from the prisoner's

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boots a wad of tissue paper dropped from a hollow in one of them and fell to the ground.

"So!" said Captain Freeman, straightening out the sheet, "you are a spy, as I thought. What have you to say?"

"Nothing," answered Craddock.

What was there to say? He knew that the scrap of paper in the captain's hand meant death for him as surely as he stood there. It was military law, and inexorable as fate.

Alone in an old log hut, with a sentinel pacing before the door and the single small window, Craddock was left to his thoughts. In the morning he was to die. He stared across the peaceful valley to the rise beyond, tipped with sombre pines, the declining sun flooding it all with golden glory. He was not afraid to die — he had faced death on too many battlefields for that. He had taken the deadly risk of his own free will, and the hazard had gone against him. Well, he would pay the price, like an officer and a gentleman.

But it was not of himself he was thinking as he stood there watching his last sunset, but of some one else, dearer by far than his own life. Some one who was waiting, hoping, praying for him to come back to her among the magnolias — one whom he had hoped, when the war should be over, to call his wife. Heaven! How could he write to tell her that they would meet no more on earth — that, even as his letter reached her, he would be lying in his grave?

As he bitterly mused there rose on the still Southern air, from out the dark shadow of the pines, a sweet and plaintive tenor voice, singing the melody of "Home, Sweet Home." It floated out on the evening silence like an angel's message of peace, bringing to the captive's staring eyes a sudden rush of tears. Had the Yankees no hearts, no feeling, that they could sing that song of all others to one who loved his home as well as they did theirs, and would never see it again?

He savagely gripped the rough slabs nailed across his narrow window, as the song suddenly ended in a long, high-pitched, quivering cry that changed to a shout, and then, running along the fringe of pines like an irregular rifle volley, burst into a cheer that echoed again and again along the quiet valley.

"Another Federal victory!" thought Craddock, mournfully. "Poor old Dixie — she has not many left to fight her battles."

Listening to the growing tumult, he presently saw the figure of a man dash out from the shadow of the pines and come racing down the slope toward the hut. As he tore along, the incessant cheering behind him, like a huge wave, seemed to bear him onward. He reached the sentry, flung two words at him over his shoulder, and dashed on without a pause. The wondering prisoner saw the sentry stare, and then with a wild yell throw up his rifle and fire it in the air.

The door of the hut was flung violently open, and the breathless runner, a fair-haired lieutenant, almost a boy, stood facing Craddock in the little room.

"Captain Freeman's compliments," he panted, "and he wishes to say that we are about to have supper, and he would feel honored if you would join us. It is poor fare, but you will be heartily welcome."

The Confederate officer looked into the messenger's boyish, excited face, astounded.

"Your captain is very kind," he answered, wondering. "But is it not an unusual proceeding to ask a prisoner to dine with his captors? It is very chivalrous, doubtless, but it is scarcely war."

"War!" the lad echoed. Then his voice choked, and he grasped Craddock's hand and wrung it till the sinewy arm ached. "War!" he repeated, his voice ringing high and shrill, "there is no more war — General Lee surrendered at Appomattox this morning — the war is over."

Jefferson Simms; His Exits and Entrances.*

BY HENRY ADELBERT THOMPSON.

ALONG in the later seventies a resident of southeastern Arizona asked to designate the best known man in the Territory would have had no hesitation in pronouncing the name of Jefferson Simms. And yet comparatively few could say they had seen him, and his habitation no man knew. That was precisely the basis of his reputation. That and one other thing; which was that on those occasions when, at intervals of two months, Jefferson Simms came riding into Tucson on his buckskin pony, he invariably signalized his advent by going directly to the Wells, Fargo Express Office and there depositing, for shipment to a bank in New York, gold bullion to the approximate amount of one hundred and fifty thousand dollars. In any town on earth, not to speak of Tucson, where all waking thoughts and sleeping dreams were tinted yellow or silver, this would have aroused comment. In Tucson it excited a certain anxiety, founded on the fact that where there was so much gold there must be more. Some enthusiasts even asserted that a locality from which one man could, with unvarying regularity, abstract seventy-five thousand dollars a month must be rich enough to make half the men in the town millionaires and to set the other half up in an independent business way. Hence it came to pass that the periodical appearances of Jefferson Simms were awaited with the same eagerness felt by those who, on a station platform, anticipate the arrival of the Transcontinental Express. When, on his sorry nag and sometimes leading a packed mule, he was seen coming up or down the main street — for his approaches were made from different directions — women dropped their sewing to gaze upon his bearded face and sloping shoulders, and merchants left their counters to communicate in advance, to the proprietors of neighboring stores, the news of his coming.

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But to all these evidences of a lively and continuing interest Jefferson Simms was apparently oblivious. Always, swerving neither to right nor left, he made his way directly to the express office; and if he ever noticed the unusual number of people who happened to have business there at or about the time he transacted his own, he made no comment on the fact. As though unconscious of the prying, and often staring, eyes fixed upon him, he would deposit his bars of bullion, take his receipt and leave the office. Then, and only then, Jefferson Simms became hail-fellow-well-met with who, and they were many, would have his company. Seated on the long veranda of the Saguaro Hotel, and always the centre of an interesting group, he would pass one day, two days, three days, a week, loafing, smoking, talking and evading — with superhuman ingenuity, his interlocutors thought — the leading questions propounded to him with astonishing frequency and, it must be said, with still more marvellous impudence. Then, generally in the morning, but again at high noon, or later, it would be discovered that Jefferson Simms had disappeared; and no one, hostler, loafer, citizen or boy, which was most remarkable of all, could say that they had seen him go. But this was before the idea of setting a systematic watch upon Jefferson Simms and his movements had clearly formulated itself in the minds of the prospectors who made Tucson their headquarters. After that there were many who witnessed his departures. Once, for example, an outlying picket, at three o'clock in the morning, saw Simms pass on the road to the Oracle, and, falling in behind, followed his trail until near daybreak. Then, on the edge of a bit of mesquit timber, he lost him; and, groping forward some distance into the thicket, suddenly found himself confronted by the muzzle of a revolver held in the hands of a masked man. Some chance passers, the same day, discovered the would-be scout blindfolded and tied to a tree and utterly unable to indicate the direction the night rider had subsequently taken. In fact, he could not certify surely that it was Jefferson Simms who had thus put an effective damper on the ardor of his search. On another occasion, two score men and women saw Jefferson Simms step on to the platform of an outgoing, westbound train; and it was afterwards ascertained that fifteen minutes prior to the scheduled time of departure he had made arrangements with

the landlord of the Saguaro to board his pony until he should reclaim him. Eight weeks later he returned, riding another horse, every bone, fibre and hair of which proclaimed the thoroughbred. The wise ones eyed the animal critically and shook their heads. It was evident that the mysterious miner had made provision not only to outwit but to outrun possible pursuers. And the correctness of this inference received immediate verification; for Jefferson Simms, as soon as he had deposited his gold in the hands of the express agent, remounted his horse and rode off, in a stride which was at once the admiration and despair of sundry spectators. Tucson regarded this appearance as a distinct defiance, which justified a resort to determined methods; and so began that game of hide and seek which, for a year or more, held the breathless attention of all the towns along the Tucson & Yuma Division of the newly-constructed Southern Pacific.

One feature of the case was very puzzling. It was to plausibly explain the motive animating Jefferson Simms in keeping the location of his mine a secret. The law would protect his possession of a claim or any number of claims; the only provision being the annual performance of "assessment work" to the wages value of a hundred dollars. To this it was replied that the mine was perhaps located at some remote point in the mountains, where it would be difficult, if not impossible, to invoke the assistance of the law in repelling an invasion of gold-hungry prospectors, who, in a day, might create a legal chaos out of which it would be hopeless for any sheriff or court to dream of bringing order. Under such circumstances it was perhaps wiser for Simms to depend on himself — calling the law to his aid only when such a course became imperative. There were flaws in this vein of reasoning, for "strikes" were often made and peaceable mining operations carried on in just such out-of-the-way places. But weakness in a logical sequence seldom makes itself apparent to most people. There were also flaws in that other logic by which the mining contingent of Tucson and vicinity convinced itself that Simms's policy of concealment was an insult to the people of Tucson, a fling at the administration of justice in the Territory of Arizona, a reflection upon the honesty of all citizens of the United States, and bordered closely upon rebellion against the general government.

These conclusions placed Jefferson Simms in a new and unenviable light; and it became perfectly plain to many that they were derelict of duty in failing to run him down and wrest his secret from him. Certain public-spirited citizens intimated their willingness to devote a portion of their means to the cause — for a like share in the resultant proceeds — and a meeting, to which verbal invitations were extended and which was not announced in the public prints, was held in the rear room of the Ojo Rojo saloon.

"Gentlemen," remarked "Stamp Mill" Smith, who acted, unofficially, as chairman, "will some one be so obsequious as to present the reasons which have induced the representatives of the leading business interests of Arizona to assemble in this room?"

"Raysuns enuff," replied "Shamrock" O'Reilly, who could be depended on to speak whenever opportunity was afforded. "There's a mine som'ers in the Territory of Aryzony, the exac' whereabouts of which is known only to wan man, and he a hoardin' of the infurmation. The reshult bein' that the indushtries of the Territory are parylyzed and the bread tuk outen the mout's of widdies and orphans, the husban's and faythers of whom might be, and by rights oughter be, warkin' them diggin's and purvidin' fer them as depen's on 'em."

"It strikes me, Your Honor," interposed Mr. A. Y. Sullivan, who had been a lawyer in the East, "that the statement of the case made by the honorable gentleman who has just preceded me was, so to speak, too little influenced by a consideration for those mitigating circumstances which it is always necessary to take into account. Undoubtedly, Mr. Jefferson Simms, to whom I understand an allusion to be made, has rights which we are bound to respect. On the other hand, Mr. Jefferson Simms should understand that we, as citizens of Arizona, have rights which he is bound to respect. To whom, I ask, does this boundless continent belong? Is it the exclusive property of any individual, or do the privileges of walking its soil and breathing its bracing air and bathing in its golden sunshine pertain to all its inhabitants, without regard to rank, color or previous condition of servitude? Are the auriferous deposits hidden in the bosom of its everlasting hills the possession of one individual who, grasping at the wealth of a Crœsus, aims to elevate himself above his

fellow-citizens, and thus strike a deadly blow at those principles of Democracy, dear to every patriotic American heart, or of the many who, by equitably distributing the rich bounties of nature among themselves, would thus be enabled to carry comfort, if not affluence, to a thousand humble, but liberty-loving, homes? I need not reply to these questions. You will find the answer, gentlemen, in your own hearts and souls."

This statement of the case was so entirely satisfactory that it was agreed, without further discussion, to pass to the next question; this being a consideration of the practical measures which ought to be adopted. Pennsylvania Peaslee, who was, comparatively speaking, a tenderfoot, and present no one knew how or why, unless by virtue of his expressed willingness to contribute a thousand dollars to the search fund, suggested the expediency of securing the services of a detective from Chicago or San Francisco, but this idea, though it aroused a passing interest, was hastily voted down on the ground that Arizona could furnish men who were veritable Dupins beside the pseudo-sleuths of the East. It was necessary, further, that the "agent" should be perfectly familiar with the country, and this pointed inevitably to the employment of home talent. Several names were mentioned, but the thought of the meeting finally turned to Manuel Romero Juan Pedro José Francisco Morelos, a Mexican half-breed, colloquially known as Jack Rabbit Jo. His name and fame were closely associated, the sobriquet having been given him on the strength of the alleged fact that he had once tracked a jack rabbit for eleven miles and killed the animal at the end of the chase. A committee was appointed to interview Jo and ascertain if he would be willing to resign his position as vaquero-in-ordinary on the Tortilla Ranch, at forty dollars a month, for an employment which would pay one hundred and expenses and leave him practically his own master. From the first there was no doubt that Jo's services could be secured, and, in fact, two days later, he reported for duty. The instructions he received were brief and perfectly comprehensible. At the next appearance of Jefferson Simms he was to fix his eye upon him and not allow it to depart therefrom until such time as that mysterious individual should be observed in the act of digging or panning gold; whereupon, having marked

down the exact locality, he was to report in Tucson immediately. The best horse obtainable was purchased and placed at Jo's disposal, and Tucson waited impatiently for the chase to begin.

Promptly on time Jefferson Simms made his appearance, went through the usual formalities at the express office, repaired, contrary to general expectation, to the Saguaro Hotel, and twenty-four hours later rode slowly out of town, headed northward, in broad daylight, and in hushed, but eager-eyed, silence, Tucson watched his exit and the subsequent departure of Jack Rabbit Jo. It would be days now — four or five at least, perhaps forty — before news could be expected, and several hundred people wondered what they would do with themselves in the interval. There were not wanting those who offered to wager various amounts of dust and coin that Jo would mark down the mine, and, as the sagacity of Jefferson Simms was estimated to be prodigious, takers were readily found. This added to the tension of a situation which actually threatened a suspension of business. It was fortunate, then, that the period of waiting was not unduly prolonged. For six days Tucson sat in an attitude of expectation, with eyes turned northward. About nine o'clock on the morning of the seventh day Jo dashed into town, on a horse which showed traces of hard riding, drew rein at the Ojo Rojo, and immediately retired behind closed doors for consultation with his employers. It was not the intention of those most interested that the information should become public property; but news which affects favorably the fortunes of an entire community is difficult to suppress. In a couple of hours it was known throughout the length and breadth of Tucson that Jefferson Simms's claim had been located and that it lay somewhere to the north; presumably in the Caliuro Range, near the place where the mountains pushed themselves into the angle between the Rio San Pedro and Aravaypa Creek.

That afternoon those who, for buying and packing and tying outfits on burros and loading buckboards, had time to look, witnessed a singular exodus. A small party, consisting exclusively of those who had been present at the meeting in the rear of the Ojo Rojo saloon, led the way, under the personal conduct of Jack Rabbit Jo. An hour later another company, reasoning that the

highways of the desert and the mountains were free to those who would traverse them, took the trail of the first, which was not difficult to follow. Still later a third party, comprising every remaining male inhabitant of Tucson who owned horse, mule or burro fell in behind the second. Then the inevitable stragglers, bearing picks and packs on their shoulders, departed, singly and in twos and threes, on foot.

Jack Rabbit Jo, at the head of the first contingent, led the way with a confidence which inspired great hopes in the breasts of his followers. He explained that he was taking them by a short cut, as Simms had made a wide detour to reach the place. For a day he went northward, then turned eastward through a pass in the Santa Catalinas, crossed the San Pedro River and skirted the southern border of the White Mountain Indian Reservation. Finally, after a journey of ninety miles or more, the Santa Teresa spur of the Gila Range was sighted. "It is there!" cried the leader, pointing with his hand; and, with answering shout, the prospectors lashed their tired horses to a gallop. But this enthusiasm moderated as they began to wind in and out among the foot-hills, and when the mountain slopes were reached the advance was made at a foot-pace. The faintly marked and rocky trail led for miles through valleys choked with huge boulders, and up and down precipitous ascents which tortured men and horses. It was at eleven o'clock in the morning of the third day out that those following observed in Jo the unmistakable signs which indicate that a hunter is in the vicinity of big game and knows it, and instinctively every other man in the party assumed a crouching position on the neck of the animal he was riding. Thus they rounded a projecting spur, and there, in a little glade, they saw a few holes in the ground and three Mexicans, two of whom were wielding pick and shovel in desultory fashion, and a third engaged in washing out a pan of dirt at a small stream a few yards distant. The appearance of the party was the signal for the immediate and willing suspension of these operations.

"Hello!" cried Pennsylvania Peaslee, who was the first man on the ground. "Whose claim is that?"

"He belong to Señor Seems," replied the one of the Mexicans who apparently occupied the position of mine superintendent.

"And is Señor Simms at home?" enquired "Stamp Mill" Smith.

"Non, Señores; he vamos it make tree, four days now."

"How much of the yellow stuff are you getting?" asked Pennsylvania Peaslee.

"No muchas, Señores; we pan an' rocker tree week for ze Señor Seems an' no catch 'um more as twenty dollar." This announcement was greeted with a shout of incredulity.

"I take it there'll be no objections raised if we pan out a little of this dirt, just to see whether you have been doing it right," remarked a gray-bearded miner.

"No carey, Señor," replied the Mexican with an indifferent shrug. "Andres, Gaspar an' me, we vamos. Señor Seems he say some fr'en's come and work ze claim. Ze fr'en's haf arrive. Adios, Señores." And the three laborers proceeded to pack their camp outfits on the backs of their burros.

"This looks bad, boys," remarked Pennsylvania Peaslee; but no attention was paid to the saying. Several pans were hastily filled with the placer detritus and carried to the stream; and, gathered in a compact circle, the miners watched the operation. When the dirt was washed off and the residuum rocked from side to side in the steel pan only the experts present were able to discover the faintest trace of gold. The prospectors exchanged furtive and uneasy looks. Again and again samples were panned from every part of the claim, each time with the same meagre results. Threatening glances were directed toward Jack Rabbit Jo, but that worthy remained unmoved, save that he shifted his hand closer to the hilt of his revolver.

"My instructions," said the guide, in a calm voice, "were to mark down the place where I saw Simms washing for gold and to report in Tucson immediately. Six days ago, lying behind that big rock on the other side of the valley, I saw him at work in this very spot." And Jo sat down on a boulder, with the tranquil air of one who feels that there is nothing more to be said.

By six o'clock that evening there were four hundred and seventy residents of Tucson in the little gulch and twice or thrice that number of pans had been washed in the brook. The returns would not have paid for a dinner for the first party at the Saguaro.

It is probable that Jefferson Simms, had he returned to his property that night, would have found his burial place in the trench excavated by his Mexican laborers. However, he did not return; nor was he seen again until, about six weeks later, he came riding into Tucson as usual. By that time those who had remained at home had indelibly impressed upon those who had made the trip to the supposed placer diggings that the whole affair was a huge but perfectly justifiable joke; and no man was found to come forward, and, by slaying Simms in cold blood, proclaim himself a victim. Besides, the mine was yet to be found.

By this time, too, Jack Rabbit Jo, as the only man who had scored even a partial success, had regained much of his imperilled prestige; and when Simms departed Jo followed on his trail. Then weeks, marked by a growing uneasiness, went slowly by, until the full term was nearly up. Accordingly there was much excitement when Jo, much the worse for wear, came dashing into town one afternoon with the announcement that the mysterious miner was coming, two hours behind him, coupled with the information that this time he was empty handed. Jo's narrative related that he had followed Simms day and night, over a route as crooked and tortuous as could be imagined and covering several hundred miles of territory. That he had camped nowhere more than a few days at a time, that he had not struck a pick in the ground and that his wanderings were apparently aimless. When this story had been told and retold several times Simms appeared; and, going directly to the express office, he made his usual consignment of bullion.

Out of the whisperings that night a theory was evolved; the origin of it being in the mind of Pennsylvania Peaslee. If Simms had done no digging it was plain that he must have an immense quantity of gold stored at some point, which he was transporting, as opportunity offered and in amounts such as he could conveniently carry, to the express office. Evidently, then, the thing to do was to form a party and, under the leadership of Jack Rabbit Jo, to traverse the exact route Simms had taken; searching in every likely place as they advanced and paying particular attention to those localities in which the miner had spent several days. There were some who objected to this theory, not on the ground

that they had no right to appropriate such a deposit, but that Simms would come in oftener were this explanation of the case the true one. However, the idea prevailed, and with so much enthusiasm that it became necessary to draw lots to determine who should go. Pennsylvania Peaslee drew a blank; whereat he seemed greatly chagrined.

The history of this expedition has never been known, because no member of it would ever indicate the course of the pilgrimage or narrate the experiences of the party. The information possessed in Tucson is limited to the fact that it returned near the time when Jefferson Simms, coming from an entirely different direction, made his next appearance.

And then the mystery deepened. Jack Rabbit Jo was a discredited man; but Silas Brewer, who had a reputation to sustain, announced his desire to take the trail. A fund, hastily raised, was placed in his hands; but only one man saw Jefferson Simms as he left the city on this occasion and by the time he reported the fact the train on which the exasperating Simms had departed was speeding eastward. Strangest of all, telegraphic enquiries failed to elicit any information regarding his destination. The conductor and brakeman were unable, on their return, to say at what point the miner had left the train. Tucson was again baffled. The usual advent of Simms occurred, however, at the end of about two months; and this time his departure and that of Silas Brewer very nearly coincided. On this occasion, too, the absence of the scout was long and wore on the already neurasthenic condition of Tucson's nervous system. The half dozen men who had backed Brewer with their money, as the time for his reappearance drew on, spent most of their leisure hours, and they were many, on the veranda of the Saguaro Hotel. Expectation lighted their faces as their "agent" drew rein at the curb, a week late. Jefferson Simms was in, exactly forty-five minutes in advance of his pursuer.

"He didn't bring any gold with him this time," said Silas Brewer, confidently, to the men who came down the steps and surrounded him.

"He has just deposited ninety-three thousand dollars' worth at the express office," replied A. Y. Sullivan.

"Gentlemen," remarked Brewer, mournfully, "I gave Simms the best run for your money I knew how. I kept him in view day and night. First, he went west and stopped in three or four mining camps that we all know about. Then he turned south, and camped on the desert. He did no work and chummed with nobody, unless I may mention a straggling Papago Indian, with whom he had a casual palaver and swapped saddles one evening down near the Baboquivari Peak."

"And made ninety-three thousand dollars in the trade," remarked Pennsylvania Peaslee.

The faces of those in the group were turned toward him in astonishment, through which there broke, sooner in some cases than in others, the light of a dawning comprehension.

"I think," continued Peaslee, significantly, still addressing Brewer, "that if you wanted to find Simms's mine you should have followed that Indian."

"Perhaps you are right," returned the scout. "Next time I will."

But the next time never came. That evening Jefferson Simms repaired to a barber shop and had his beard removed. The next morning he arrayed himself in a suit made by a New York tailor, and remarked to A. Y. Sullivan, across the breakfast table, that if the boys would gather on the veranda he would tell them something that would be of interest. They gathered.

"Gentlemen," remarked the tall mystery, as he handed around a box of fine cigars, "it is my treat. You have had considerable fun, during the past year, in endeavoring to find where I was getting the gold which has been deposited at the express office from time to time; and also, I may add, in elucidating in your own minds my reason for wishing to conceal the location of the mine from which the yellow metal was taken."

A hush of intense expectancy was the only answer to this statement.

"Three years ago," continued Simms, "I was in northern Mexico with four companions, prospecting the hills close to the Yaqui country. I have always admired the game fight those redskins have put up against the Mexican authorities; consequently, when an occasion offered to do them a service, my comrades and I

took prompt advantage of it. An Indian never forgets an injury — or a kindness. We were able to save the lives of a Yaqui chief and several of his warriors when they were closely followed by Mexican troops, whose purpose in pursuit was, we thought, entirely unjustifiable. Some weeks later a messenger came from the chief I have mentioned and asked us to visit his camp, promising that it would be well worth our while. On arrival we were treated as guests whom our dark-faced friends delighted to honor. At a solemn council we were informed that we had been bulletined throughout the tribe as brothers of the Red Man; that we were free to come and go in their territory without fear of molestation; that the Yaqui who did not go to our aid in any time of need was a dog and a traitor; and, the chief added, as they knew their white friends desired gold, he would himself show us a valuable placer deposit which we were at liberty to work. The condition of this privilege was, however, that no one save ourselves should be allowed to have anything to do with the mine nor be permitted to enter the country; and, in removing the proceeds of the diggings we must take the utmost care that neither Americans nor Mexicans discovered where we secured the treasure. The chief pointed out that if the white men found there was such a rich deposit of gold in their territory there would be a stampede to mine it. The Mexican Government would thus discover the secret and would probably send troops in to take the land away from its hereditary possessors. We, of course, agreed to the conditions. Three of the party remained on the ground to work the mine. They employed the Yaquis in the diggings and commissioned me for the sole purpose of transporting the proceeds to the express office."

"Why did you not stay there until the diggings were worked out and then bring the gold to a shipping point in one consignment?" interrupted "Stamp Mill" Smith. The others smiled in amused contempt at the question.

"Because we were in a dangerous couutry," Simms indulgently answered. "There was always a chance of accidental discovery and the possibility of our being waylaid by Greaser bandits on the final journey. A single man, with the gold hidden in his saddle bags or packed on a worthless looking mule, runs small risk compared with a heavily laden convoy. Then, too, while feeling

moderately sure of the good will of the Yaquis, we did not consider it wise to put the entire product of our placer deposit in jeopardy of a possible change of mind on their part. I had nothing to do but take the gold brought to me by one of my comrades, who travelled disguised as an Indian, bring it to Tucson, for this is the nearest safe railway point, and spend the rest of my time throwing pursuers off the track. In this latter occupation I was materially assisted by the fifth partner in the deal, with whom I was in constant communication; and this partner, gentlemen, was your fellow-searcher and quondam acquaintance, Pennsylvania Peaslee. I may remark that he is distinctly not a tenderfoot."

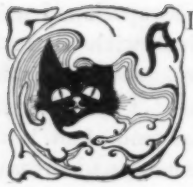
A general stir of anger arose at this announcement, and several of the party sprang up with the evident determination of seeking the traitorous Pennsylvania and perforating his anatomy.

"Hold on! gentlemen," Simms called out. "Mr. Peaslee left town on the last eastbound train. You need not look for him. Perhaps it will suit your mood better to have something with me. Step up to the bar and drink the health of the Yaqui Mining and Development Company, which has just worked out the richest strike made in this section in years."

There was nothing better to be done. The men who had pursued Mr. Simms so closely for months past responded readily to his invitation, and while they were refreshing themselves in this manner and talking over the hoax, Jefferson Simms quietly walked out and was never seen in Tucson afterward.

The Footsteps of Fear.*

BY FANNY KEMBLE JOHNSON.



LL his life Herrick had heard them, as every other man may hear them if he stops to listen. The trouble with Herrick was that he had stopped too often and listened too long. Now, if one waits until they come too close, it is difficult to distance them again, and if one listens until they ring too clearly there is no sound in the world, not even the whisper of a woman, that can ever again quite drown them. And the worst of it is that no man can face this Fear — that, however the bravest man may turn, it is always from behind that he hears the steps which follow as if a coward fled.

All men do not hear them — only the exceptional may, or the man exceptionally situated. Herrick happened to be both. Many men have bequeathed to them an inheritance of death; but Herrick had also an inheritance of perfect loneliness. His people were all at peace in the graveyard plots belonging to the different health resorts of two continents, and he had lived alone since a lad in an old house haunted by their portraits, and their names on the flyleaf of every book from which he learned life. Herrick was not a coward; but one day he locked up the house, and went out through the green old garden. At the gate he looked back.

"I was born in you," he said to his home, "and if the girl I love didn't have to drag over Europe with an invalid mother, I would live in you, because you are next door to her, and make the most of my time. But I won't stay by myself — and maybe I'll never see you again."

He looked away for a moment to the war-defaced college buildings on the low green hills beyond. They had been home, too. He hesitated, and a blush rose to his face. Then he kissed his hands to it all with the impulsive gesture of a child, and turned his back on his too quiet past.

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In the station by the river he bought a ticket to the biggest and noisiest city in his native State, which was a Southern one. We will omit the intermediate stages. Enough that in a month he had been able to fulfil his intention of getting a position on one of the biggest and noisiest papers in that city.

He reasonably argued that a reporter on night duty with a six-hour margin of daylight would not have much time in which to lie awake listening, and having an income, he could afford this hypothesis. Herrick was after mental excitement, and he got it. For the first time he was really taken out of his own brain-life and into the lives of others. That was a good result to begin with. His ancestors were the same short-lived set of idiots, and the footsteps sauntered as cynically as ever on his trail. But he had not time to consciously listen, or to fret over the selfishness of the girl's mother, who doubtless heard footsteps hunting her down, too, poor thing! or to write minor poetry, which is the silliest thing a grown-up man with an intellect can do — unless he can sell it. He had only time for his work and he found out that he was good at it. He also found out that six hours of midday when one slept was worth a night of ten hours to lie awake and listen in, and that only crazy people may safely cultivate their imaginations. Therefore, he endeavored to confine his attention to his daily work and to let his ancestors alone. On the whole, he succeeded. Every morning, with his brain at its busiest, he wrote the pages that went to make up his Saturday letter to the girl he loved. When that was done he ran down, all in a minute, it seemed. Sometimes he dropped his head on the letter and went to sleep. Oftener he reeled to the bed, and fell on it, the daylight on his eyelids, black night beneath them. He had not leisure to think of himself at all. But there was a drawback to this. It was good for his mind, but it was not always good for his body. Sometimes a trivial seeming cough worried at his throat for days, and sometimes neuralgia gripped with a clutch not to be loosened except with red hot whiskey. Usually, however, he was deadened to these discomforts. His consciousness was filled with other things — the tearing hurry and devious devices of his work — its crowds, and candidates, and confessions — its murders and its marriages. And there were storms of music — there were civic ban-

quets — there were noted divines under whom he catnapped in the galleries of the first churches. But better than all these were the thousand special and individual occurrences that took his breath away, and made his flesh glow with the discoverer's rapture. He had lived so among books for his twenty-six years that he had not known before that things which had never been put into books ever happened.

Once, while musing under a noted divine, he got to thinking over this.

"What stories I could write!" he cried to himself. He sat there staring at the speaker, but saw him no more than he saw the red and gray Saint John, or the blue Mary Mother in the triple-arched casement behind the pulpit. He went to Heaven and tasted power, and then, as usually happens, Fate, to get even with him, reminded him of his limitations, and through the open window behind him he heard the footsteps. It was the pause for the long prayer. Herrick bent forward, leaning his cheek against his arm. It was as if bone grazed bone. After five minutes he began to feel that the steps would enter the church if he sat there longer — so near they were — so loud. He hurried out in the middle of the prayer. It was a winter morning, but in that Southern city it was like early spring. The grass in the square was green, and a border of white violets had hastened to bloom. It was Friday, and he gathered a few of them for her Saturday letter. He stood for a moment holding them, conscious only of the sunshine. It deadened him to himself again. It filled the city as wine fills a cup, with a life-giving, sense-stealing potency. But even in the sunshine the cough nagged him. "Listen," it whispered.

"You need a rest," said Herrick's mind to his body, "or you won't last even your time. I've been going too fast for you, curse you! but I've had such a good time."

He looked at his arm with disgust.

"I couldn't row a mile with you," he said. "I would be ashamed to go inside any gym with you. You would have let that tough knock me down last night if I hadn't had a pistol along to help you. Oh, I suppose you do need a rest, only you can't have it, you know. I shan't go back home and wait — by

myself. And I'm not brute enough to take her back, now — even if her mother would kindly die and give me the chance."

He went on through the sunshine with his violets, and climbed to his room, and wrote his daily letter, shutting the flowers up in the thin sheets for her to dream over. Then he slept, and when he awoke it was time to go down to the office and read copy until midnight. After that he was detailed to the city jail, where a death watch was going on.

Herrick was conscious of being wound up to go by the time he came to this part of the programme. The sensation was pleasant after the weakness of the morning. He did not care where his strength came from so long as it did come on demand. The night had turned cold and damp when he went out into the street. The sea wind blew the sea fog down his throat until he strangled, and stopped trying to talk to Griggs, who had been told off with him.

"It's a nasty job," said Griggs, who had leanings toward a counting-room clerkship, and who hated his place.

"Oh, shut up!" rejoined Herrick, trying to speak without breathing, and failing. "What do you know about it?"

"More than I like to," retorted Griggs, good temperedly.

Herrick spoke as effectively as a man could with his mouth shut; but when they halted at their destination he forgot his irritation, and he forgot Griggs. He stood as if alone, listening to a negro chorus that rose and sank — a death-wail that might have turned the heart of Ajax to running water — that might have melted to milk the bones of Achilles.

In ten minutes, perhaps, Herrick roused from a trance, and discovered that he had somehow got himself admitted into the immense vaulted corridor. It was pitch dark at either end; but midway down, in a glaring ring of gaslight, a half circle of swaying negroes, drunk with death and song, clasped hands before an open cell door. Within the cell two black forms flattened themselves out on the stone floor, and grovelled and moaned. The jailer crouched near Herrick and cried out of pure nervousness, and at his elbow was Griggs, shaking like grain when the earthquake tremor runs. Herrick hardly noticed him. It was on his nerves, too. He had watched men die; but it was the first time he had watched men who were afraid to die — men who had

stopped for the last time to listen, not vaguely, but with mathematical certainty, to the footsteps of their Fear. Between two singers, momentarily parted, Herrick saw that one condemned man twisted as if from creeping flame — that the other lay rigid, with arms outstretched in a shameful cross. Their sobbing breath struggled through the chanting, which pitched itself yet higher as the gap closed and the chorus swelled. That very morning Herrick had heard the same hymn given out by the noted divine without dreaming of its possibilities. Then it had ascended as least as high as the arched roof of the church. But now the jail stones shrank shuddering apart, and let it loose to soar, a sinking of the heart, a sickness of the flesh, a savage scream of the frightened soul, to the blackest reach of space. Herrick knew what the condemned men heard beneath that singing. He knew why they crouched with hidden gray faces. He wondered that all of these singing savages did not fall down and die of sympathy. The footsteps of each man's Fear became audible to him. Some, years away, others close at hand, and those that would gain the barred door by daybreak, mingled and merged themselves in his brain.

At this point Griggs mastered himself sufficiently to take Herrick into the jailer's room, which had been given up to the newspaper men that night. He was relieved when Herrick began making copy in a commonplace way. As for Herrick, the truth is he had not quieted down at all. The motor wheel of an electric plant is not motionless because it revolves so rapidly that it seems motionless, and Herrick had reached some such condition of the nerves. The men around him joked profanely to keep their spirits up. He did not blame them. They were, in the main, an unimaginative gang; but that death chant was of a nature to curdle the commonplace in the veins of any creature born to die.

Herrick turned out the proper amount of sensational copy, but that was his brain. His heart beat with the sick hearts in the cell. The men were dogs, but he felt the agony of their terror seize on his soul, as if it were trembling flesh in the hangman's grip.

By six o'clock the advancing footsteps had gained the door. An interval of silence fell, and presently the condemned men

were invited to keep their appointment. The black door gaped into a gray cavern of dawn, and they went out shuddering.

Herrick kept nearest. He watched the man on his side. As they reached the threshold he met this man's eyes, point blank, And they seemed not the eyes of a man. Before he had been consumed by the fear of Fear. But now Fear itself had entered into him, as devils are said to have entered into the men of old.

That look stilled Herrick into a stone. It left him futile to feel — incapable of imagining. What, indeed, did he know of Fear who had but heard the footsteps of his own?

A few weeks later Herrick did something he had not expected to do. He returned home. He wrote the girl that it was to get well. In his heart he knew that it was to die. He had resisted coming back; but he did not know what else to do. He was dying so fast that he had not strength enough for a pretense of work among the living. He was just in the way, and people, when they did not swear at him, looked sorry for him. It was simplest to get out of the way, and away from the people.

The garden was greener than ever, and he had violets of his own to put in her letters. He wrote them every day. They were mostly lies. He desired to keep her away. He did not wish her to have his dying face to remember. He very well knew what it would look like. He heard the footsteps all the time. They advanced steadily. He could almost name the date of that gray spring morning when they would enter his room, and that ghastly occupation of his living, struggling body would ensue. Warm days he dragged himself to the garden seat, and looked lovingly back at his beautiful home, with the sunshine entering at the wide doors.

The old house, the old pictures, the room of books, the green garden, and the violets underneath the oaks — all these things Herrick devised with a lover's pleasure to the girl he loved. He seemed gathering a handful of flowers to send her, and, indeed, when the trifling legality was concluded, it was as if he had done as slight a thing.

He smiled as he thought of the stories he had meant to write. They seemed to be so little worth while. He read Marcus Aurelius, as the author best fitted to dwarf the footsteps. In many moods

he ignored them, or mocked at them, but he always knew that at the end Fear would possess him, as it had possessed that mere brute, and that an excess of imagination and a total lack of it cursed men equally. He did not mind waiting as much as he had supposed that he would. He did not know if it were philosophy, or if death benumbed. He had done with letters to the girl, because his brain served him no longer to invent lies, and he found it a relief. He tried not to think about her; but in May even a dying man may not forget his love.

Perhaps Herrick's sick yearning called her back in telepathic ways; but more likely some meddler had written her the truth. At all events, she came home to him one day. But her fresh youth and beauty could not give him back life, and she had better have stayed away. She only made it harder for him to die a week later. As it chanced, he died in the night and alone. They would not let her see his dead face. She sobbed that she could never forgive them for that. But those who found him dead probably knew what they were about.

A Thousand-Dollar Job.*

BY RICHARD BARKER SHELTON.

CARLETON was reading the "want page" of the evening paper, when his eyes fell on the following advertisement inconspicuously placed:

> **$1,000 WILL BE PAID**
> to the gentleman with curly blond hair and blond moustache, who will tear up paper Thursday morning and take the consequences. Must be 5ft. 11, and weigh between 160 and 170 lbs. No references required. For further information, inquire at 206 Fondyke St., Room 26, between 10.30 and 12, Tuesday.

Now, Carleton had been out of work for several weeks, and the prospect of having a thousand dollars was sufficiently interesting to make him re-read the quaint advertisement carefully. It savored of adventure, too. There were vast possibilities in the little phrase "and take the consequences." Carleton's was the healthy mind of a sound and vigorous body, and a spice of danger was to him a pleasant stimulus, with no trace of morbid imaginings about it. If he could assure himself, he reasoned, that the affair was honest and honorable, he would make a bid for the thousand.

He was five feet, ten and three-fourths inches in height and tipped the scales at a trifle under one hundred and sixty pounds. By shaving his beard, he would fulfil the requirements, for his blond hair curled tightly about his head, and his long, blond moustache had received much attention since the proud day it had first evinced itself.

He sat for a time, tapping the paper and gazing through the window of his side room. With a thousand dollars he could forget his failures and the drudgery of clerkships. He could make a start for himself. Perhaps even, he might, in time, think seriously of a home, over which a trim figure of a girl with brown hair should preside. That settled it. He decided to call on the morrow at Room 26, 206 Fondyke Street.

206 Fondyke Street was an office-building with marble front and tile floors, and Room 26 was well down the hall on the second

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floor. There was no name on the ground-glass of the door — nothing but the number in dull, black numerals. Carleton turned the knob and walked in. The office and furniture were evidently new. A smell of varnish pervaded the place. At one end of the room — the left as he entered — were two roll-top desks. Before one of these sat a slight man with a gray beard and gray eyes; at the other was a clean-shaven, portly, business-looking man of middle age.

The portion of the room occupied by the desks was divided from the rest by a wooden rail. The remainder of the room, perhaps two-thirds of it, was bare of furniture, save for cane-seated chairs ranged about the walls. There were some dozen men seated in these chairs, and Carleton noticed that all of them had curly blond hair and blond moustaches. One was inside the rail, seated by the desk of the large man, who was speaking to him in low tones.

As Carleton took a chair by the window, the gray-bearded man looked searchingly at him over the desk. Then he turned and spoke to the man at the other desk. He of the girth swung ponderously around and stared at Carleton — whether or not in approval it was hard to determine. At length he turned again to his desk, and resumed the conversation with the man beside it.

In four or five minutes, the gate in the rail clicked and the blond man who had been within came out rather dejectedly. The next moment, Carleton felt his heart thump madly. The portly man was beckoning him.

He arose briskly, and entered the little gate, which complained loudly at his intrusion. The stout man motioned him to the seat beside the desk, and Carleton sat down with that sensation tugging at his temples which the union of hope and fear alone can give.

"Occupation?" questioned the gentleman by way of opening the interview.

"Book-keeper," Carleton responded.

"Employed?" The questioner shot out his interrogations in a manner which showed clearly his aversion to wasting words.

"Not at present," said Carleton.

"Humph!" the big man ejaculated. After which he was silent for a moment or two, abstractedly rolling a pencil about the desk. When he turned again to Carleton his brows were contracted.

"You want that money pretty badly, don't you?" he said, slowly. Carleton assured him that such was the case.

"And you'd risk a good bit for it, eh? You seem that sort."

Carleton nodded.

"Humph!" he grunted again, and again rolled the pencil about the desk. At length he turned to the thin gentleman.

"Looks like 'E. P.,' doesn't he?" he said.

"The resemblance is certainly marked," the thin man replied.

"Best so far, eh?" the stout man asked, with a chuckle.

"I hardly believe we could do better," was the response.

"Um-m," the other mused. "See here," he said, suddenly leaning towards Carleton, and speaking in a way that cut out every word sharply, "would you risk everything for that thousand?"

"If you except honor — yes," Carleton said, quietly.

"Well said," the other answered; "well said. Gentlemen," and swinging about, he addressed the men who waited outside the rail, "there is no call to detain you longer. If you care to come here again at half past four this afternoon, you will learn whether or not there is any further chance."

When the door had closed behind the last of them, the stout man again turned to Carleton.

"Now," said he, "the matter is simply this. It is to the advantage of a certain company (of vital interest, sir) to have a certain man destroy the paper mentioned Thursday morning. The certain man has gone-away — sneaked, if you like. He hadn't the sand. For the paper must be destroyed in the presence of some two hundred men — two hundred men, mark me, who are so on edge from fancied wrongs that they scarcely know what they do. They won't like it. Rest assured of that. They'll howl and curse and threaten. Maybe they'll shoot. The certain man knew this and — well, sneaked. You are very like this man in build and features. In that respect, we are more fortunate than we hoped. You destroy the paper. If the crowd howl and curse merely, you get your thousand and a bad quarter-hour. If they are wild and shoot badly, you get the thousand and the doctor's bills. If they shoot true, whoever you name gets the thousand and you get a decent burial. That is the proposition. Now, the point is, is it worth it?"

The big man tilted back in his chair and looked narrowly at Carleton. There was something in his face that belied his gruff exterior — a lurking kindliness which permeated his brusque speech. Carleton was sure the worst side of the affair had been set before him. He sat for a time, looking at the floor and idly drumming on the arm of the chair. When at length he looked up, he met the big man's gaze squarely.

"I'll do it," he said, simply.

"Good," the big man said. "Let's see, what's the name?"

"Carleton."

"Ah, yes. Well, I'm Mr. Whiting and this gentleman is Mr. Somers. Somers, unless I'm mistaken, we're in rare luck. You won't back down between now and Thursday — I mean you won't think too much about it and lose your nerve at the last minute?"

"That's not my cut," said Carleton.

"No, I don't believe it is," Whiting rejoined. "Come here, then, Thursday, at nine o'clock. Don't think about it until then. Here," he said, thrusting some bills into Carleton's pocket, "amuse yourself somehow. Remember, don't think too much, and be here at nine. And now good-day."

Outside, Carleton stood for a moment running over the events of the last half-hour. Then, with an effort, he put them from his mind and walked quickly up the street.

. . . . . .

Just as the clocks were striking nine Thursday morning, Carleton opened the door of Room 26, 206 Fondyke Street, which he now realized had only been hired temporarily. Whiting and Somers were waiting within, and each greeted him with a cordial handshake.

"Now," said Whiting, "if you'll get into those clothes on the chair over there, we'll be off."

Carleton donned the suit of tweeds and changed his soft hat for a brown derby. The three then descended the stairs and entered a waiting carriage.

"Well," Somers said, as they rattled over the pavements, "your nerve seems to hold."

"Never was better," Carleton answered, whereat Whiting grunted and pinched his arm encouragingly.

They drove to the outskirts of the city, and drew up before a little box of a building set in a monotonous expanse of brick wall. Carleton knew it was the entrance gate of one of the great steel-works, and if his heart pounded against his ribs, it was not from any fear, but rather from a sense of the uncertainty and excitement before him. Whiting led the way across the yard to a building, evidently the offices, up a flight of stairs and into a sunny room, whose broad windows gave an ample view of the many buildings about the yard, looming gaunt and grimy in the morning sunshine. Somers swung open one of the windows and Whiting mopped his brow.

"Twenty minutes' grace," said he. "They won't be here before half past ten. By the way, Carleton, in case of — er — er — unpleasant accident, you know, you haven't given us the name of — of — " Whiting ended lamely with a cough, and Carleton nodded that he understood. Then he gave them the address of the girl with the brown hair.

"You'd better sit at the desk here by the window. They're gathering now," said Somers. Groups of men — such men as one meets with dinner-pails every day in the street — were coming into the yard, some bantering, some serious, but all seemingly aware of a tension soon to be relieved. As the minutes flew, the groups grew in size. At twenty-five minutes past ten the yard was full, and a few angry shouts came up from below. Carleton sat quietly at the desk, glancing occasionally at the gathering crowd. Somers was now and again pulling out his watch. Whiting busied himself with some trifling task.

At ten thirty-five a murmur ran through the crowd, and Whiting exclaimed in evident relief, "Well, they're here."

Carleton saw Somers turn a trifle pale, and Whiting shut his square jaw until deep lines showed about his mouth. The group came close under the window and Whiting stepped before it.

"The answer is ready," he shouted. He turned to Carleton and laid a paper on the desk before him.

"This is it," he said. "Steady, now, steady!"

As Carleton rose and stepped to the window, he felt a sudden fierce joy. He was aware of a desire to shout. He seemed to walk on air. A moment he looked steadily into the upturned

faces. The next, he tore the paper to bits and flung it into the yard below.

And then, Bedlam! Oaths, yells, cat-calls, and from somewhere back in the crowd, a sharp report. He was aware of a numbness in his right arm, a feeling as of a red-hot iron in his shoulder, of the room whirling round and round, of Whiting's strong arm supporting him, and of Somers's voice, thick and indistinct, saying, "It's in the shoulder. For God's sake get him back from the window!"

"Well done," Whiting was saying. The voice seemed to come from the yard. "Well —" Carleton had fainted.

It was evening when he came to in the room of an uptown hotel. Somers and a doctor were there.

"Mighty plucky, my boy," Somers said, as he sat beside the couch. "You're hurt in the shoulder a bit, but you'll pull round all right. If that certain man had had half your grit this would never have happened."

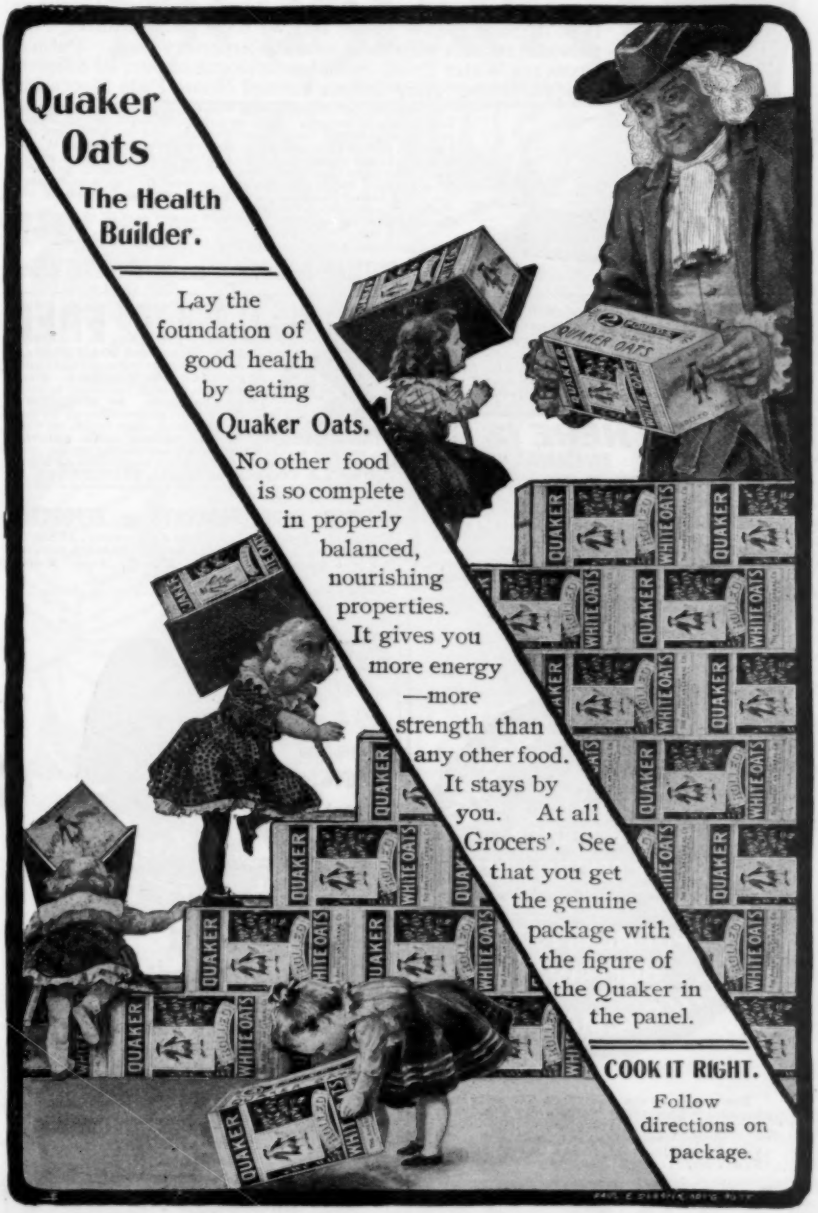
Later in the evening they brought Carleton a last edition of one of the papers, and he read in the inch-and-a-half type of the scare heading:

STROM SHOT!

Crisis in Trouble at Crompton Works.
Threats of Violence Carried Out.
President Strom Tears Up Committee's Demands.
Strikers Disheartened by President's Aggressive Policy.

A messenger boy brought a note signed "George L. Whiting, Treasurer."

"Good work," it ran. "The Crompton steel-works need another book-keeper." And Carleton, propped up on the couch, called for paper and wrote to the girl with the brown hair.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